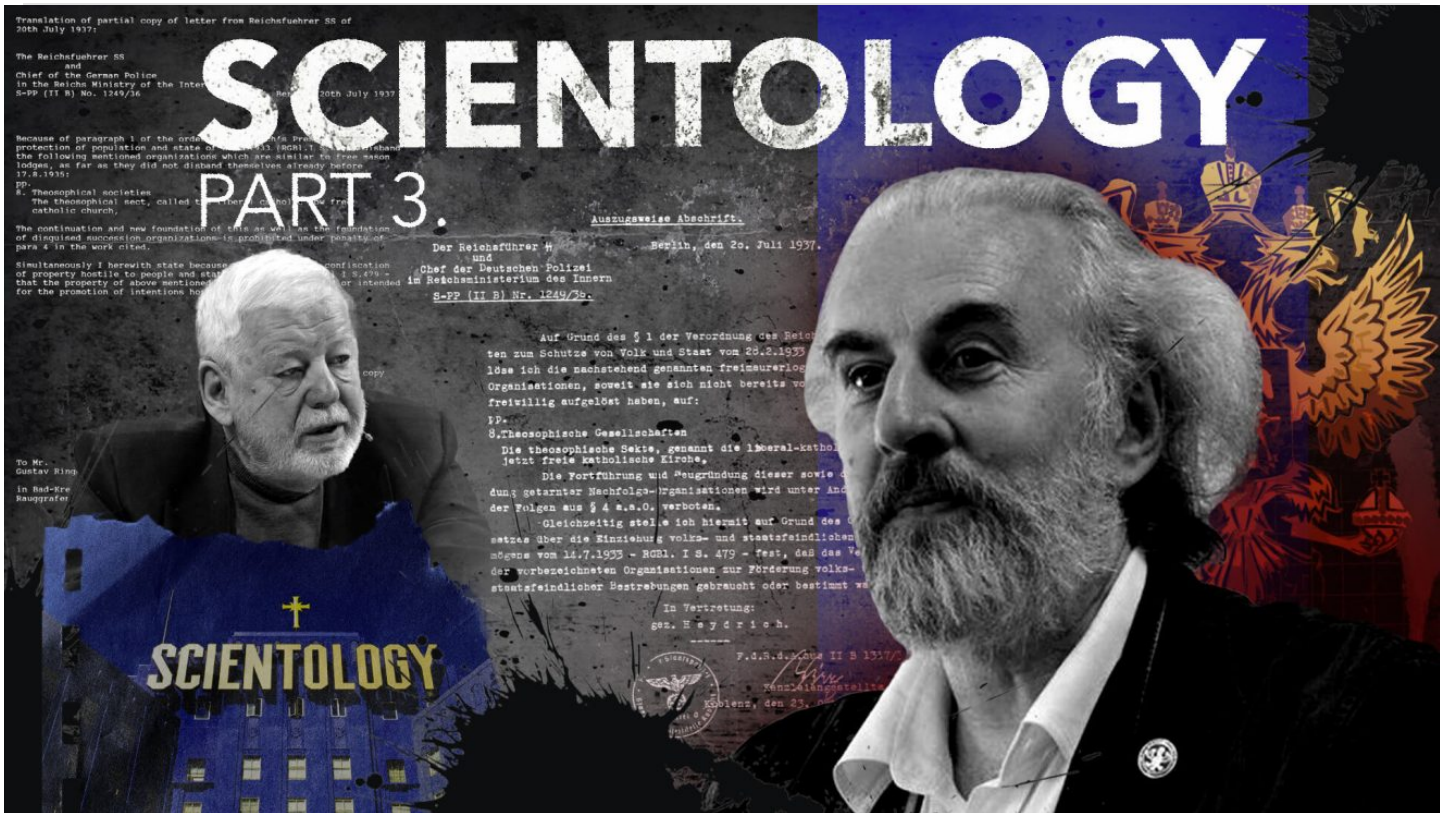

ARTICLES

Scientology: A Thorn in the Side of Anticultism. Part 3.

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In the first two parts (Part 1, Part 2), we explored the activities of the Church of Scientology and its fight against followers of Nazism, specifically anticult organizations. Through the active efforts of Scientologists, a connection between global anticultism and Nazi psychiatry has been uncovered, revealing it as yet another tool to achieve the anticultists' ultimate goals. In this third part, we will examine the activities of Scientologists in the country that has become the epicenter of anticultism and discuss the immense benefit of these efforts to the global community —

benefits that have yet to be fully recognized and appreciated.

Russia: The Stronghold of Anticultism

After the failure of anticult terror in the United States and the enactment of the U.S. International Religious Freedom Act in 1998, Russia became, from the perspective of the global anticult network, the standard-bearer for creating a totalitarian regime aimed at spreading such a regime worldwide. [1]

This topic is thoroughly examined in the documentary The Impact. In this article, we aim to expand on that information and view it from a slightly different angle.

Anticult activities in Russia are directly tied to the Russian Orthodox Church and fully supported by it. The central figure in Russia's anticult movement is Alexander Dvorkin, a self-proclaimed sectologist with no formal education in religious studies. He is the author of sectology textbooks and the term "totalitarian sect." Dvorkin is also known for stating, "In two words, what is Scientology? It's international intelligence services gathering information on every person who enters their field of vision." [2]

Within the Russian academic community, there is a clear stance on "sectologist" Alexander Dvorkin: his work is unscientific, riddled with numerous factual errors, and filled with offensive evaluative judgments. This is hardly surprising given that Dvorkin is a disciple of Danish anticultist Johannes Aagaard and serves as vice president of the Danish "Dialogue Center," founded by Aagaard.

In the early 1990s, after the proclamation of religious freedom in Russia, foreign missionaries from the world's largest Christian denominations began to arrive, as did new religious movements, including the Church of Scientology.

In March 1993, Alexander Dvorkin held his first conference on the issue of cults, titled the "Bogorodichny Center." Following this conference, the first

criminal cases against so-called “sects” began to emerge. This created a demand for scientific substantiation and expertise, which a group led by forensic psychiatrist Fyodor Kondratyev initiated on his own accord. According to Yuri Savenko, head of the Independent Psychiatric Association (IPA), psychiatry began to be increasingly applied from 1994 onward to control religious dissidents and others. A special group was established at the Serbsky Center to “study the negative influence of religious groups,” headed by Professor Fyodor Kondratyev. [3]

On September 5, 1993, the Apologetic Information and Consultation Center of St. Irenaeus of Lyons was established. It was headed by Alexander Dvorkin with the blessing of Patriarch Alexy II of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).

By 1994, during the ROC Bishops’ Council, a decree titled “On Pseudo-Christian Sects, Paganism, and Occultism” was adopted. It declared Scientology a “pseudo-religion imported from the West” [4]. These events marked the official beginning of the ROC’s involvement in the anticult movement.

The primary mission of the St. Irenaeus of Lyons Center became the collection and dissemination of fabrications and defamatory claims against any religious organizations outside the ROC. Here is an excerpt from Alexander Dvorkin’s book, Sectology: Totalitarian Sects [5], in which he invents elements of Scientology’s history for dramatic effect:

“*For instance, in 1978, in France, Hubbard was sentenced to four years in prison and a monetary fine for fraud but avoided punishment by fleeing the country. Since then, he has not shown his face in France*.”

The factual account:

On February 14, 1978, the Paris High Court sentenced three French leaders of Scientology, along with Hubbard (in absentia, as Hubbard never resided in France or received a court summons) [6], to fines and suspended sentences. However, on March 2, 1980, the appellate court overturned the verdict, also

recognizing Scientology as a religion [7].

In another instance, Dvorkin openly mocks Scientology by inventing a derogatory abbreviation for one of its structures:

"Within Scientology, there is an elite structure called the 'Sea Organization,' abbreviated as 'Morgue'." [8]

In his mockery of Scientology, Dvorkin twists the name of its elite structure, the 'Sea Organization,' into a grim pun by abbreviating it as 'Morgue' — a word that ominously emerges from splitting 'Sea Organization' in Russian.

This book has been repeatedly expanded with descriptions of new "dangerous, destructive sects" and reissued numerous times by Dvorkin. It has also been widely promoted by the Russian Orthodox Church.

Alexander Dvorkin maintained connections with CAN. In 1994, he organized the International Christian Seminar "Totalitarian Sects in Russia," inviting Ronald Enroth, a member of CAN, as a speaker [9]. Naturally, the seminar included mentions of the Church of Scientology and Hubbard. Moreover, Dvorkin openly acknowledged his connection to CAN during an appearance on the TV program Vremechko on April 16, 1996 [30]:

– Dvorkin: I am an American citizen. I have an American passport. My entire education is American.

– Correspondent: Which organization are you primarily affiliated with?

– Dvorkin: It's called CAN. It's a network for identifying cults.

Dvorkin has other "associates," such as Carol Giambalvo, a member of another anti-religious hate group connected to the earlier iteration of CAN. Her book advocating for deprogramming was translated into Russian and distributed at an anti-religious seminar in St. Petersburg [32].

Today, as courts, society, and experts have recognized deprogramming's

illegality, immorality, and ineffectiveness, Alexander Dvorkin distances himself from both CAN and deprogramming. According to Dvorkin, information about his ties to CAN initially appeared on a Narconon website. He acknowledges that he spoke about CAN but claims his words were taken out of context. We will leave this claim without further comment.

In 2001, Dvorkin participated in the AFF conference in New York, attended by anticultists who either supported or directly employed deprogramming techniques (including Claire Champollion, Michael Langone, Friedrich Griess, Daphne Vane, Steven Hassan, and others). Dvorkin participated in similar conferences in 2003, 2005, and 2006. At present, some of the individuals listed above, along with other proponents of deprogramming, are active participants in FECRIS [30].

As previously mentioned, Dvorkin's primary ally in the fight against "sects" has been forensic psychiatrist Fyodor Kondratyev [10]. According to the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "For 12 years, Kondratyev oversaw the Oryol Special Psychiatric Hospital, where dozens of political prisoners were tortured with neuroleptics" [11].

Legal proceedings were not without complications. When the original claims of "severe harm to mental health and personality deformation" were proven groundless, they were replaced with accusations of "illegal induction into a hypnotic state" and "damage caused by hypnotic trance" and later by charges of "subtle influence on the subconscious level." These accusations were even applied to texts encouraging the rejection of alcohol and drug use [11]. This also extended to the Narconon organization, which is associated with the Church of Scientology.

In June 1996, the Russian Ministry of Health and Medical Industry issued an order revoking the "Guidelines for the Detoxification Program," effectively banning the use of detoxification methods and other techniques derived from L. Ron Hubbard's teachings, as well as Scientology and Dianetics methods, in healthcare practices [12].

In 1996, Kondratyev was included among the developers of the Federal Target Program for Strengthening the Fight Against Crime. As part of this work, he compiled an analytical review titled “Medical and Social Consequences of the Destructive Activities of Totalitarian Sects” [13].

In his book Modern Cult Formations (“Sects”) as a Psycho-Psychiatric Problem, Kondratyev wrote:

“The development of this topic began on my own initiative but arose from ongoing forensic psychiatric practice. As the head of the expert department at the V.P. Serbsky State Scientific Center for Social and Forensic Psychiatry, I began receiving criminal cases from prosecutors or courts starting in 1994. These cases required expert evaluation of whether the activities of a particular neo-cult (“sect”) contained factors harmful to mental health.

The first such evaluation concerned the written materials of the Bogorodichny Center. My staff literally sifted through a sack of literature from this neo-cult before providing an expert opinion.”[13]

His book was published in 1999 by the Missionary Department of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate.

From the report of the Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia:

“*When a psychiatrist-academic (such as the directors of the Serbsky Center, Dmitrieva and Sidorov) or a psychological expert from the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences relies on the unscientific works of Alexander Dvorkin and Steven Hassan, it is a symptom of degradation. The current situation in France and Germany is not much better.*”[14]

Through his years-long campaign to discredit New Religious Movements, Kondratyev fabricated the problem of “religious sectarianism and mental health” and developed a series of purportedly scientific positions. He later presented these at Russian and international congresses and forums,

introduced practical manuals and methodological recommendations, authored several specialized articles, and secured opportunities to address the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation, parliamentary hearings in the State Duma, the Moscow City Duma, and appearances on special television programs and other media platforms.

The expert evaluations conducted on the activities of the Hubbard Humanitarian Center, the Church of Scientology, and the Bogorodichny Center sparked public controversy. Critics even described these actions as a new use of psychiatry in Russia to suppress freedom of conscience.

At the same time, Kondratyev's primary conclusion on this issue was that while everyone is free to believe as they choose, if someone's actions, due to their absurdity, pose a genuine public threat, appropriate preventive measures should be taken — potentially including psychiatric intervention if necessary.

Kondratyev's "scientific" justification of the dangers posed by "destructive sects" significantly contributed to the creation of numerous laws restricting the activities of New Religious Movements.

A highly publicized defamation case, Yakunin v. Dvorkin, took place in Moscow in 1997 [15]. The plaintiff was a Russian human rights organization led by prominent Soviet dissident Father Gleb Yakunin. The defendant was Alexander Dvorkin, a functionary of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church and a leading activist in Russia's anticult movement (ACM). Notably, Yuri Savchenko, head of the Independent Psychiatric Association, described Alexander Dvorkin as a "deprogrammer and religious graphomaniac" [16].

Dvorkin's defense was supported by his associate Johannes Aagaard and the German deprogrammer Thomas Gandow, as Dvorkin maintained strong connections with German anticultists. The defendant relied heavily on a significant repository of "exposures" about new religions that had been accumulated by the Western anticult movement over the years. Essentially, Dvorkin's arguments were grounded in the Western — and specifically German — anticult interpretation of the entire phenomenon of New Religious

Movements (NRMs), which formed the basis of the claims presented in his pamphlet. This anticult perspective was widely disseminated by Russian media.

In the end, Dvorkin won the case, marking the beginning of a new stage in Russia's anticult movement.

In 1997, the Russian Federation enacted the law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations," which imposed significant restrictions on the activities of New Religious Movements. This law introduced the so-called "15-Year Rule," requiring any religious organization in Russia to exist for at least 15 years before it could qualify for official registration as a religious organization. The Church of Scientology had previously been officially registered as a religious association in 1994 [17]. Under the new law, all religious associations with legal entity status were required to amend their founding documents to comply with the law and re-register with the Ministry of Justice by December 31, 2000. Failure to meet the re-registration requirement by the deadline would result in the organization's dissolution by court order.

Subsequently, between 1998 and 2005, the Church of Scientology of Moscow submitted 11 applications for re-registration to the Ministry of Justice. All of these applications were rejected on arbitrary and discriminatory grounds.

In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that Moscow authorities had violated the Church of Scientology's rights to freedom of religion and association by denying the Moscow church re-registration. However, even this ruling failed to alter the actions of Moscow authorities. Ultimately, the Church of Scientology was forced to re-register as a public association.

This pattern repeated itself for every individual Church of Scientology in each city across Russia. Due to the refusal of Russian authorities to register Scientology religious groups as religious organizations, individual Scientology churches in cities such as Naberezhnye Chelny, Rostov-on-Don, Ufa, Samara, Barnaul, Vladivostok, Novosibirsk, Surgut, Penza, Yekaterinburg, Omsk, and others faced systemic discrimination from local officials. These authorities

subjected them to endless investigations and attempts to dissolve their religious groups. Actions taken against them included accusations of civil violations and criminal offenses, often resulting in court cases based on fabricated claims — primarily allegations that these religious groups were conducting either medical or educational activities without proper licensing.

The introduction of Russia's anti-extremism law in 2002 provided yet another tool to pressure the Church of Scientology and other New Religious Movements. In the case of Scientology, this law was used to justify the confiscation and censorship of Scientology's religious writings.

Attack on the Law "On Psychiatric Assistance and Guarantees of Citizens' Rights in Its Provision"

Here, we would like to highlight one of Alexander Dvorkin's many statements, which effectively labels anyone who joins New Religious Movements as "abnormal," perpetuating stigma:

"It should be noted that not everyone is prone to joining a sect, but rather a certain risk group characterized by lowered emotional states, diminished critical thinking, heightened suggestibility, and psychological and mental instability. Therefore, this group cannot be unequivocally considered psychologically and mentally healthy." – Dvorkin, 2002 [18].

In his discussions, Alexander Dvorkin repeatedly mentioned the need to establish Orthodox rehabilitation centers for "sect" victims in small rural settlements far from cities. In our view, this bears a resemblance to the "Alaska Law" in the United States.

The 1992 law initially aimed to transition Russian psychiatry from totalitarian practices to a legal framework. Its goal was to ensure freedom and personal inviolability for any individual targeted for isolation under accusations of insanity. The law mandated specific judicial procedures before applying forced measures to commit someone to a psychiatric institution. It also allowed for independent judicial assessments, reducing the risk of "erroneous" or

politically motivated expert conclusions [11].

By the mid-1990s, under the auspices of Russia's Ministry of Health, a commission of psychiatrists — primarily composed of staff from the Serbsky Center — was established. The commission worked on amendments to the Russian Federation's Law "On Psychiatric Assistance and Guarantees of Citizens' Rights in Its Provision." The primary goal of the Ministry of Health's commission was effectively to return mentally ill individuals to a state of legal disenfranchisement.

The proposed amendments significantly curtailed individuals' rights regarding involuntary hospitalization and forced evaluations, undermined their legal protections, and opened the door to various cases of abuse.

On September 17, 2003, the State Duma was scheduled to hold its first hearings on this draft law. However, at the last moment, the proposal was withdrawn from consideration due to public and media backlash. The energetic efforts of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights, which works closely with the International Association of Scientologists, played a crucial role in this outcome. The authors of the draft law avoided public debate on the substance of the proposed changes.

Unwilling to proceed with their initial plan to significantly weaken citizens' rights guarantees under the law "On Psychiatric Assistance and Guarantees of Citizens' Rights in Its Provision" — particularly in terms of judicial protection and personal safety — psychiatrists took a different approach. Nonetheless, amendments to the law were introduced in August 2004, though of a different nature.

Under the revised law, Russia's legislative and executive authorities no longer provided any guarantees for the proper standard or quality of psychiatric care. From then on, psychiatric hospitals ceased to receive funding from the state budget, with funding responsibilities shifting to regional budgets — a significant challenge for smaller regional budgets. Consequently, the amendments also abolished service quality standards. Notably, the initial draft

of the amendments was even more severe.

Once again, the active role of Scientologists in advocating for human rights and defending the law “On Psychiatric Assistance and Guarantees of Citizens’ Rights in Its Provision” did not go unnoticed. That same year, in 2004, the Church of Scientology in the city of Ufa was liquidated.

In 2005, during a roundtable organized by the State Duma of Russia, Mikhail Markelov, the first deputy chairman of the Duma Committee on Public Associations and Religious Organizations, gave a welcoming speech.

In his address, Markelov specifically targeted the Church of Scientology, labeling it a sect. He highlighted recent actions by law enforcement aimed at curtailing its activities in Russia. He emphasized the “colossal influence on the minds and souls of Scientology adherents,” particularly through its drug rehabilitation program, Narconon, which he described as a form of recruitment. Markelov expressed hope that their activities would soon be banned altogether.

Later, in 2006, Alexander Dvorkin established the Russian Association of Centers for Religious and Sect Studies (RACIRS), with the St. Irenaeus of Lyons Center playing a central role. In 2008, the Main Directorate for Combating Extremism of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, also known as Center “E,” was created.

In 2009, the Russian Ministry of Justice established the Expert Council on Religious Studies. This body was granted the authority to investigate religious organizations and determine whether they promoted extremist views [19]. The council was chaired by Alexander Dvorkin, a person without the proper academic qualifications to act as a specialist in religious studies. It is common for individuals appointed to such councils, or even those called as expert witnesses in court cases, to lack the necessary or even basic qualifications [19].

Subsequently, Center “E” began collaborating with RACIRS and started targeting religious associations not affiliated with the Russian Orthodox

Church, subjecting ordinary Russian citizens to terror and framing their activities as extremism [20].

Markelov's wishes, expressed at the 2005 roundtable regarding Scientologists, were realized by 2007. A criminal case was opened against the leaders of the Moscow clinic Narconon-Standard. The case was initiated following complaints from citizens about what they deemed excessively high treatment fees. Additionally, by court order, the Scientology Center in St. Petersburg was dissolved [21].

Scandal! Renowned Russian Sectologist Declared Mentally Unfit

This was the headline of numerous articles in the Russian press in May 2014, as a major scandal erupted: Alexander Dvorkin's medical records were leaked online and made publicly accessible [22]. According to the published medical file, Dvorkin had been under psychiatric observation for an extended period, with diagnoses including "cyclothymia" (a form of manic-depressive psychosis), "pathological personality development," and "psychophysical infantilism." Specialists at the Serbsky Center received medical documents from a neuropsychiatric dispensary regarding Dvorkin's mental health. After reviewing the records, they concluded that he required constant psychiatric supervision and the use of psychotropic medications.

This admission only came after a representative from Neuropsychiatric Dispensary No. 3 provided both written and verbal confirmation that Dvorkin's records were indeed in the institution's archives [23]. In response, Dvorkin even created a "shame board" targeting those who raised this issue in public discourse.

Subsequently, websites hosting these documents began mysteriously crashing, and archives were quietly scrubbed. (Medical Record of Alexander Dvorkin: Complete Archive).

In an explanatory article on an Orthodox website, Dvorkin accused

Scientologists of orchestrating the document leak:

"Here, despite the apparent anonymity of the resource authors, the handwriting is recognizable: it's the handwriting of Scientologists" [24]. He also lamented that "since the sites hosting the 'source materials' are located abroad, outside the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation, shutting them down requires prolonged correspondence with the hosting companies. Often, such firms do not respond to inquiries." Toward the end of the article, Dvorkin added, "All these 'exposés' appeared online as if on cue when I began discussing the Scientological connections of Ukraine's acting Prime Minister, A. Yatsenyuk."

For more on how RACIRS and the St. Irenaeus of Lyons Center incited hatred in Ukraine before the war and who truly instigated the conflict, see the documentary The Impact.

Returning to the article, it's worth noting Dvorkin's final remark when asked by a journalist why he wasn't taking any action:

"I know perfectly well what to do. But I'll say it again—I'm not going to disclose my steps or future plans regarding this matter" [24].

We can now judge Dvorkin's actions with the benefit of hindsight. In 2015, following a lawsuit by the Ministry of Justice, the Moscow City Court ordered the self-liquidation of the Church of Scientology of Moscow within six months due to violations of the Federal Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations in the Russian Federation."

As for Dvorkin himself, the 2014 scandal forced him to step down as chairman of the Expert Council. He assumed the role of deputy chairman — but to this day, it remains unclear whose deputy he is.

The Fusion of the Anticult Movement and Russian Government Rhetoric

In 2020, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) published a report titled “The Anticult Movement and Regulation of Religion in Russia and the Former Soviet Union” [25]. The report explains that, after 2009, “the anticult movement and the rhetoric of the Russian state noticeably merged over the subsequent decade.” Citing Putin’s concerns about spiritual and moral security, Dvorkin stated in 2007 that New Religious Movements (NRMs) were intentionally “harming Russian patriotic sentiments.”

Regarding Dvorkin, the report states:

“*Dvorkin’s influence extended beyond the post-Soviet sphere. In 2009, the same year he was appointed head of Russia’s Expert Council, he also became vice president of the Federation of European Centres for Research and Information on Sectarianism (FECRIS), a French anticult organization with Europe-wide influence. The French government provides most of FECRIS’s funding, and the group regularly spreads negative propaganda about religious minorities, including at international forums like the OSCE Human Dimensions Conference. Dvorkin’s center is FECRIS’s main partner in Russia and receives substantial financial support from both the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the Russian government*” [25].

If it seems that the anticult movement exclusively targets NRMs with terror, this is not entirely accurate. The entire purpose of the anticult agenda is to eradicate dissent in society. For instance, in 2022, new regulations for medical care for mental and behavioral disorders were introduced. Homosexual attraction was also classified as a mental disorder, effectively criminalizing LGBT identities in Russia [26].

This illustrates how psychiatry, when co-opted by the anticult movement, becomes a punitive mechanism serving the goals of a global network influenced by Nazism. Recently, the Constitutional Court of Russia provided commentary on the infringement of human rights through forced psychiatric measures: the duration of involuntary treatment for individuals with mental disorders cannot, in itself, be grounds for termination of the treatment. [27] In

other words, these measures are considered necessary treatments, which can continue indefinitely until the patient is deemed fully “cured.”

Here, it is fitting to share the words of someone who, in 1999, experienced life in such a psychiatric facility:

“The regime at Psychiatric Hospital No. 4 surpasses prisons in terms of the cruelty and harshness of its staff. In prisons, inmates are allowed outdoor walks; in the hospital, they are not. In prisons, inmates can use a library; in the hospital, they cannot. Punishments involving medical means and methods are administered with cynical mockery of the utterly defenseless patients” [11].

And this was before the 2004 psychiatric reform. Conditions for patients have since become significantly worse.

When one recalls that the roots of global anticultism lie with those who, in Nazi Germany, advocated for the “final solution to the Jewish question,” compiled lists of “destructive organizations,” personally signed orders for the extermination of children in concentration camps, and participated in the T4 program, the return of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) for treating personality disorders seems like a logical continuation. This treatment was recommended for implementation by the Russian Ministry of Health starting in 2025 [28].

In addition, a new law in Russia mandates that medical personnel and police share information about individuals with mental disorders, alcoholism, or drug addiction. Now, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) officers can “monitor” such patients and assist medical staff in transporting those who avoid appearing at psychiatric dispensaries. Is this the future their grandparents fought for during World War II?

In 2021, two Scientology organizations were declared undesirable in Russia: the World Institute of Scientology Enterprises and the Church of Spiritual Technology. This designation means that any activities by these organizations are categorized as extremist by Center “E” and will be harshly suppressed.

To date, 195 organizations in Russia have been deemed undesirable. Ultimately, it all boils down to straightforward documents banning any so-called "sect" deemed dangerous to society — eerily reminiscent of Nazi Germany.

We began the story of Scientology with Hubbard's publication of A Russian Textbook on Brainwashing, which includes a transcript at the beginning of the book — a speech by Lavrentiy Beria, head of the Soviet secret police, addressing American students at Lenin University about the use of psychiatry as a tool for social control. It was Beria who, in 1939, ordered the creation of the first prison psychiatric hospital in the USSR. The special department within the ordinary psychiatric hospital in Kazan was insufficient to hold the growing number of mentally "abnormal" state criminals. Citizens were sent for forced treatment and isolation, mostly without judicial process, based on rulings by the Special Council of the NKVD of the USSR [11].

One quote from this book on creating a compliant herd comes to mind:

"*Make all kinds of drugs available, offer alcohol to teenagers, and fill them with sex literature*."

Could this not be what drives global anticultism to attack organizations like Narconon, which help people escape drug and alcohol addiction?

It is worth noting that on June 26, 1953, Beria was arrested on charges of treason in the form of espionage and conspiracy to seize power. He was subsequently executed.

Alexander Dvorkin and his network of accomplices have pushed Russia into the same extremism that existed in Germany in the 1930s [29]. Is this not treason?

Suppose the return of electroconvulsive therapy is due to a lack of medications, as some specialists suggest, and electricity is still sufficient for now. What's next in reducing costs for maintaining and treating patients? Will gas chambers and crematoriums be introduced?

The path to a full totalitarian regime in Russia, facilitated by global anticult activities led by Alexander Dvorkin, is nearing completion. But should we in Europe and the United States take comfort in thinking it cannot happen here?

To be continued...

Source:

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Alexander Dvorkin anticult movement Scientology

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